

BOOKS OF THE WEEK SEEN IN REVIEW AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS
OF THE SEASON'S
LATEST FICTION

An Amazing Posthumous Romance by Mark Twain
—A Vivid South American Novel by E. L. White.
New Fiction by Arthur S. Hardy, Stacy Aumonier,
Beulah M. Dix, Katrina Trask and Others.

THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER.
(Harpers.) By Mark Twain.
(95c.)

The readers of Mark Twain's posthumous romance, *The Mysterious Stranger* (Harpers), are likely to be puzzled. The English used in telling it and the constructive skill are unlike anything in his familiar books, and there are pages in his indictment of civilization which seem to have been written after the outbreak of the war in Europe. A supernatural being comes to some boys in a German village in the old days when people believed in witchcraft. He is all powerful and without human feelings or standards. He makes one boy, the narrator, see what the acts of the people about him mean when stripped of sentiment and of hypocritical conventions. He shows him how cruel things are really. He makes him share in or look upon senselessly stupid and brutal actions; then he enumerates the succession of horrors which constitute the history of civilization, and denounces the crimes committed in the name of the "moral sense." For every instance of wrongdoing through mob violence, superstition or intolerance he describes he could furnish plenty of examples in the history of the past or of to-day, and he is by no means the first to describe progress and civilization in terms of war and destruction. Neither is he the first to annunciate the theory of the "boiling sea" of the universe, with which he ends his book, like a shriek of defiance. It is an amazing piece of work, which will scandalize many good people, an outburst which can be with difficulty made to fit our notions of either Mark Twain or Mr. Clemens. For some curious reason it is issued in the form of a holiday book, with handsome colored pictures by N. C. Wyeth, and some careless parents may give it to their children for a Christmas gift.

EL SUPREMO. (E. P. Dutton & Co.) By Edward Lucas White.
(\$1.00.)

In a novel of 700 pages Mr. White, a new writer, pictures with great vividness and much detail Paraguay in 1816 and its Dictator, Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, who is the central figure of the attention of the reader who is fascinated by unusual characters or who enjoys novel settings. The great wealth of description and geographical, ethnic and historical minutiae interferes with the telling of the story, yet the story is there and it is a capital romance of the old style, filled with hairbreadth

escapes and with the happiest endings. The novel tells of an American who had fought with Bolívar and San Martín and who comes to Paraguay with the idea of liberating its people from Francia's harsh rule. He plots to overthrow the Dictator, who has decreed that he must be called El Supremo by his subjects. When the hero meets Francia he falls under the spell of El Supremo's extraordinary personality. Nevertheless, to himself and his fellow conspirators the American explains that he is attracted to the man as he is repelled by the despot. He conceives it to be his duty to stir up the Paraguayans and then to join with them in compassing Francia's overthrow only if he decides that El Supremo's rule is more injurious to the cause of popular government than the man as he is repelled by the despot. There are many thrilling moments in the ingenious plot.

HELEN. (Houghton Mifflin Company.) By Arthur Sherburne Hardy.
(\$1.25.)

The development of a young girl left free to act for herself is described with much delicacy by Arthur Sherburne Hardy in *Helen* (Houghton Mifflin Company). She is American to the backbone, even if her mother was French, and chafes at her dependence on a tyrannical grandmother, an expatriate who lives in a villa on the Riviera. Suddenly she finds herself possessed of ample wealth and flits to Paris under the wing of an amusing Russian prince. There she turns to her other grandmother, a delightful French woman of birth who loves her. The girl is attracted by a French cousin, who is a very nice boy, and falls in love with him. The affair is described delightfully and the kind meddling of the Russian is very entertaining. Mr. Hardy has other views for his heroine and we rather resent his killing of the boy. There is a hero, an American business man, who happened to be the agent in the change in the girl's life, who loves her. His feelings are known to the reader, who may sympathize with him, but he sees so little of the heroine and the relation is so casual that it is difficult to see what chance she has of noticing him at all. He is much more friendly with her little brother, who is a fellow traveler. Mr. Hardy is able to convey the charm of good society whether among the foreigners in Italy and in Paris or in the homes of the French nobility; the people who appear are drawn distinctly and are attractive, the impulsive prince, her experienced husband and her wise Ambassador cousin, the old French servant. Equally distinct are the disagreeable persons, even though touched off in a few lines. A jarring note is struck in a mischievous making American woman when she shows her malice and in her extraordinary repentance. It is the heroine, however, that the reader will care for and understand; she will be found to be satisfactory in every way.

OLGA BARDEL. (The Century Company.) By Stacy Aumonier.
(\$1.25.)

The first half of Stacy Aumonier's *Olga Bardel* (The Century Company) is remarkably fine work. The sordid side of London tenement life is seen through a small girl's eyes. Her relatives are disreputable and are bullied by a mysterious and evil minded creature who is shown later to be a lunatic. The child has musical talent, which is developed under difficulties, but when the money value of her piano playing is discovered she is first employed in a museum and then taken in hand by dishonest managers, who exploit her as a musical prodigy. They live on her and give her nothing. She finally rebels at their interfering with her right musical development and escapes from them. So far the story is well

A Love-Duel IN SPACIOUS TIMES.
By JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY.
Author of "The Glorious Reckless," "If I Were King," etc. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.35 net.

An old-time romance of the days of Good Queen Bess. It is a love-story told—or rather it is a love-duel fought out—in this famous author's best vein.

Locke's Greatest Success THE WONDERFUL YEAR.
By WILLIAM J. LOCKE.
Author of "The Beloved Vagabond," etc. Cloth, 12mo. \$1.40 net.

"There is something of the charm of 'The Beloved Vagabond' in Mr. Locke's new novel. Altogether the story is one that no lover of Mr. Locke's writing can afford to miss. It has humor, atmosphere, and quaintness in admirable combination."—*The Outlook*.

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STACY AUMONIER, AUTHOR OF "OLGA BARDEL" (THE CENTURY)



KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN, AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF A CHRISTMAS CARD" (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN)



ISAAC F. MARCOSSOW, CO-AUTHOR OF "THE TAMING OF CALINGA" (E. P. DUTTON & CO.)

constructed. It is a Dickens theme treated according to the ideas of modern realism, and gloomy though the picture may be it is true and brilliant. The girl is taken up by well to do friends, studies abroad, and on her return falls in love and is married. She has no luck, for her husband is engaged in himself, and when she takes up her music again and tries an American tour she is only partially successful and her manager cheats her. On her return she finds that her husband has run off with another woman, leaving two children on her hands. She works hard to support them, but though she has met the right man at last, he fails her in the time of need; so she sacrifices herself and marries a rich man. That practically is her story, though the author hurriedly allows her, after many years to become a widow, to lose her son in the war and to marry her lover. It is rather hard to make out her character, notwithstanding her self-sacrifice and her queer loyalty to her people, or to discern the artistic temperament in her. She hardly appeals to the reader, however, for she may be for her misfortunes; that is where the author fails in common with other "realists."

THE FAR CRY. (Duffield & Co.) By Henry Miller Rideout.
(\$1.25.)

An unusually good story of adventure is told by Henry Miller Rideout in *The Far Cry* (Duffield & Co.). After some affection and effort at impressionism has been surmounted, after an elaborate shipwreck in which a number of young men are prominent who are to play only a secondary part subsequently, we get to a desert island in Philippine waters and find the hero there. Then the story becomes fairly direct and interesting. After some Robinson Crusoe experiences the hero is directed very ingeniously to another island, on which an eccentric Englishman resides with his lovely granddaughter. The hero and his companions defend them gallantly against an obnoxious enemy. There is an abundance of mystery and excitement, an excellent hand to hand fight and a satisfactory ending.

BLITHE MURDER. (Macmillan.) By Beulah Marie Dix.
(\$1.25.)

Two street waifs of London manage to get aboard a ship bound for New England in Beulah Marie Dix's *Blithe Murder* (Macmillan). The girl is a capable young person and makes herself useful. She is taken up by an amiable young widow with a baby and by a masterful Boston spinster, who shows even in those very early Colonial days the qualities that have marked her kind ever since. After they land the girl is sent as a bond servant to a farm. There she gets into trouble because she takes things to help her boy shipmate, who is of much weaker character and has been abused by a harsh master. The Indians steal the widow's baby, and the girl, who runs after it, is also taken captive. She is saved by her boy friend and a disreputable relative, and finds a good home at last with the spinster. The incidents in the story are simple and natural, in accordance with the facts of New England history; the girl is charming as well as level headed. It is a pity that the author should have taken the trouble to study thieves' jargon, for it adds little to the interest.

THE INVISIBLE BALANCE SHEET.
(John Lane Company.) By Katrina Trask.
(\$1.40.)

A very common type of young man is the hero of Katrina Trask's *The Invisible Balance Sheet* (John Lane Company); he has had a college education, thinks only of himself, feels

superior to his duties and the work at hand for him to do, and is sure of success in the vaguer and bigger things about which he knows nothing. He is attracted to a charming girl who loves him, but finds it as hard to make up his mind about her as about other matters. His boyish impulsiveness almost offsets lack of character. At the moment of proposing to the girl he learns that he is made heir to a very large fortune on condition that he never marries and decides to accept the inheritance. He at once gratifies all his literary and artistic tastes as well as his yearnings for society life. The story then halts while the author describes New York society; she reports the brilliant and brilliant talk of the women after a dinner party, giving to each one a marked individuality, and

HOW THE CHARLES FROHMAN BIOGRAPHY WAS WRITTEN

Not often is there such a varied combination of personality and achievement in collaboration as exists in the case of Isaac F. Marcossow and Daniel Frohman, who wrote "Charles Frohman, Manager and Man." Mr. Marcossow, on the one hand, is one of the most versatile of magazine writers, whose performances range from breaking the long silence of Wall Street's criminal rich to being the economic historian of Europe's great war. On the other hand is Mr. Frohman, who long has occupied a distinguished place in the American theatre and who, like his brother, has been an eminent master of stage stars.

The reason for this collaboration is exceedingly interesting. Mr. Marcossow and Mr. Frohman have been close friends for years. Their friendship really began when Mr. Marcossow was financial editor and New York editorial representative of the Saturday Evening Post. When Charles Frohman went to his tragic death on the Lusitania, it was inevitable that he should have a biography. Nothing was more remote from Mr. Marcossow's mind than to assume this task. When the editor of a well known monthly magazine singled him out for the honor of writing a biography, he was urged upon him that his career as the historian of the Wall Street sphinxes had equipped him to write about anybody.

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"Nothing that I ever tried to do has given me a greater personal pleasure than this life of Charles Frohman," writes Mr. Marcossow. "It was a great privilege to know the man who is his hero. Even Daniel Frohman's brother, did not realize at the outset what an extraordinary man he was. I thought at first that it could be told in eight or nine magazine installments and then I found that it was a great deal more than that. When we got into the story the ramifications and amazing points of human contact expanded it into a full size man's job."

"The arrangement for this work was very simple. Mr. Frohman's long and intimate connection with the theatre gave him a knowledge of the man whose life he was to write. Day by day he assembled the Frohman stars and the Frohman playwrights around his hospitable luncheon table at the Lyceum Theatre and the facts were disclosed in a very delightful fashion. The writing of the book, of course, fell on me, although throughout the work Mr. Frohman's counsel and cooperation were of the utmost value."

"Of course, the most compensating feature of the English Frohman expedition was the contact with Sir James Barrie. He was Frohman's most intimate friend, and like Frohman, a shy and aloof personality. But he was very glad to talk about his friend. As a matter of fact, one reason why Frohman and Barrie got on so well was that they were the two shyest men in the world. Sir James told me that they would go out walking or riding for hours without exchanging a word and yet having a very wonderful time."

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Possibly the Greatest American Historical Novel
EL SUPREMO
By Edward Lucas White

The New York Globe says—"It is a fascinating book, and comes nearer to being a great historical romance than anything that has yet been written about our own romantic half of the world."

Price \$1.50 net. Postage extra. E. P. DUTTON & CO., 681 5th Ave., N. Y.

THE BELOVED SON. (Small, Maynard & Co., Boston.) By Fanny Kemble Johnson.
(\$1.25.)

The long struggle between an affectionate father and his loving son to make the youth give up drink is described by Fanny Kemble Johnson in *The Beloved Son* (Small, Maynard & Co., Boston). They are Virginia gentlemen, and the scene is set in southern Virginia, the mountains and Kentucky. The father is a physician, but behaves as a doting mother would and relies on gentleness. The fact that the son drinks is kept constantly before the reader, but its manifestations are hidden, for the craving is attributed to heredity and the youth withdraws to seclusion when the spells come on him. In consequence we have a succession of affectionate talks between the two, all ending alike; each admirably pathetic and vivid, but cumulatively rather monotonous, leaving the reader somewhat impatient at both parties and their way of dealing with their problem. The solution is melodramatic. The father, the son and a young girl who helps, and shows more sense than the men, are charming in every way, and will hold the reader's attention. The problem, however, which the author has chosen to tackle cannot be settled by sentiment alone.

THE ROMANCE OF A CHRISTMAS CARD.
(Houghton Mifflin Company.) By Kate Douglas Wiggin.
(95c.)

In a pleasant short story of New England village happenings, *The Romance of a Christmas Card* (Houghton Mifflin Company), Kate Douglas Wiggin tells how the sight of two Christmas cards brought two prodigal home. The women are first met, the competent minister's wife and the self-sacrificing sister. The men who return, however, the shiftless brother and the self-satisfied business man, while true enough to nature, seem pretty poor creatures, by no means worthy of the affection bestowed on them.

THE TAMING OF CALINGA. (E. P. Dutton & Co.) By C. L. Carlsen.
(\$1.35.)

It is a striking prose poem of savage life that C. L. Carlsen has written in *The Taming of Calinga* (E. P. Dutton & Co.), and at the same time a revelation of what the Philippines are at bottom, which should enlighten those who discuss their affairs. A wild head hunter in pursuit of his prey falls into the hands of the authorities in a small settlement. They are all half-breeds, native tribes, crossed by Spanish or Chinese blood, the civil and military heads, the priest, the trader, men and women. The tragedies of humor with which their cruelty, brutality and treachery are shown makes them all the more vivid and the contrast with the primitive qualities of the helpless savage the stronger. We are made to see civilization as it appears in his mind. The ending is that he is enacted during his story turn the taking of life into a trivial matter. He meets with love, too, of different kinds. At the end he is allowed to wreak justice before returning to the wilderness. It is a brilliant and well sustained piece of work.

BOOKS AND BOOKMEN.

A new book on advertising has just been published under the title "Advertising and Its Mental Laws" (Macmillan). The author is Henry Foster Adams of the University of Wisconsin. The volume has a direct aim—to present in simple language the basic facts and principles of psychology which are related to advertising and to point out the application of the principles; second, to reduce the complexities of the printed advertisement to its elements and to show with mathematical exactness the effect of the various elements; third, to compare the results of the experiments which have been carried on in the laboratory with the results of actual advertising campaigns.

The new edition of Edgar Lee Masters' "Spoon River Anthology" contains, in addition to the many drawings by Oliver Herford, which have not appeared in any previous edition, twenty new poems. These introduce new characters in the now celebrated community of Spoon River, narrating with insight and humor the lives of the main facts of their several careers.

In connection with the publication of this illustrated edition of Masters' work one is moved to wonder whether in due time it will be as highly prized as the first edition without illustrations. There is a list of a Masters' subscribers who paid \$15 for a copy of the first printing of the Anthology, while sales of it at anywhere from \$5 to \$10 are not unusual.

J. H. Kerfoot, the literary critic of "Life," will give a series of lectures this winter, under the auspices of the Lord & Taylor Book Shop in New York. Mr. Kerfoot is the author of "How to Read," a group of essays on the art of reading, and no critic is better equipped to offer sympathetic and incisive judgment about books. Kerfoot's talks will be informal in character. He will discuss those of the new books which deserve more than passing mention, taking up three or four in each lecture, not from a severely technical standpoint, but considering them in relation to current events and broad movements of thought.

One of Kate Douglas Wiggin's greatest successes was her famous Christmas story, "The Bird's Christmas Carol." The book has gone into countless editions, and has been translated into nearly all the languages of Europe. Mrs. Wiggin's latest book, "The Romance of a Christmas Card," just published by Houghton Mifflin Company—another Christmas story—bids fair to approximate the success of the "Carol." So great was the demand for the book that two editions were found necessary before publication.

"The Mysterious Stranger," Mark Twain's new book which was published last week, was written years ago in the light of the great humors of the period. He often talked the story over with Albert Bigelow Paine, his biographer. It was a theme which was very near to Mark Twain's heart, but he could not decide whether to publish the story in its present length or to enlarge it. Only recently the manuscript of "The Mysterious Stranger" was found and put in print for a serial in Harper's Magazine and now into book form.

How many of the historical novels that flourished as "best sellers" at the end of the last century have survived to be read at all widely to-day? Very few certainly, but among them must be counted Dr. Weir Mitchell's "Hugh Wynne: Free Quaker." It has just passed into its twenty-fourth edition.

Richard Richard By HUGHES MEARNS
A new novel about a man who avoided wealth work woman

until—but that's the story. It is a clean book, and may be given to anyone who likes thoughtful humor.

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Now Ready
James M. Beck's New Book
"The War and Humanity"

A Notable Sequel to "The Evidence in the Case"

The Thousands of readers who in many countries and languages read "The Evidence in the Case" will find equal interest in James M. Beck's new book, in which he resumes the discussion of the ethical questions which have arisen in the World War since its outbreak.

"The War and Humanity" deals especially with the attitude and policies of the United States in the world crisis, and emphasizes its imperative duty to abandon its traditional policy of political isolation and exert its great influence as one of the Master States of the World.

Speaking of "The Evidence in the Case," Lord Bryce, author of "The American Commonwealth," in his speech proposing James M. Beck's health at the great dinner given in his honor in London on July 5th said:

"For the clearness of its statements and the cogency of its legal arguments it has not been surpassed, if indeed it has been equalled, by any writer since the war began."

"The Evidence in the Case," Price \$1.00. By mail \$1.10.
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BONNIE MAY
By LOUIS DODGE

"A story as bright and entertaining and lovable as this tale of Bonnie May"

Bonnie May is a child of the stage placed in conventional environment, is refreshing to read."—*New York Post*.

Bonnie May is a quaint, lovable, amusing creation, and Mr. Dodge is to be congratulated upon the skill with which he has drawn her picture."—*New York Times*.

Bonnie May is a charming piece of work, written with a fine, quiet naturalness, its effects being achieved without strain of invention or torture of language for style."—*Reedy's Mirror*.

Bonnie May is elfin, unexpected, and wholly adorable. . . . No more delightful book has appeared this season."—*Los Angeles Graphic*.

Charles Scribner Sons Fifth Ave., New York

Illustrated by Reginald Birch. \$1.35 net.

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